

North Texas Daily

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News



University President Harrison Keller speaks during the Feb. 12, 2025 Faculty Senate meeting. **Photo by Aiden Gonzalez**

Faculty senate faces changes due to state law

By Hannah Everett
Managing Editor

The university’s faculty senate will undergo changes this semester following the passage of new state laws, which tighten restrictions on faculty bodies statewide.

Senate Bill 37, passed on June 20, requires regents to decide by Sept. 1 whether to revise faculty senates, bodies made up of faculty that advise on academic matters, university curricula and hiring or replace them with less independent faculty bodies.

The university Board of Regents amended the regents’ rule during the regularly scheduled regents meeting on Aug. 14 to uphold the faculty senates at all university campuses, and make changes in order to comply with state law.

“[University President Harrison Keller] has stated that he values the partnership of the UNT Administration and the Faculty Senate,” said Coby Condrey, faculty senate chair and associate librarian, in an email to the *North Texas Daily*.

The faculty at UNT are dedicated to the success of their students and to ensuring the academic rigor of the curriculum.”

Condrey said the senate’s current membership will change to include

appointed and elected representatives of each college, as outlined in SB37. Currently, the university’s faculty senate webpage lists 55 members, but the new change will cap membership at 60 people.

“This year is a transitional year for the Faculty Senate,” Condrey said in the email. “We will change the current membership to include appointed and elected representatives of each college that has faculty members, but the senate’s composition will be a hybrid between the former system and a new system that will be developed by the Charter and Bylaws Committee.”

Referred to as the higher education oversight bill during the session, the bill calls for the creation of a state-level committee comprising political appointees to conduct comprehensive five-year reviews of university curricula. This includes the change, now required by state law, of officer appointments by Keller.

“The officers elected for this year will be appointed officially by the president,” Condrey said in the email. “Senator’s terms will change to conform to SB37’s parameters. We will update the senate’s charter and bylaws to include specific provisions of SB37.”

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Sports

Payton Annis is first legacy player to score a goal, plans to make impact at North Texas



Freshman forward Payton Annis kicks the ball up the field against Sam Houston at the Soccer and Track & Field Stadium on Aug. 17, 2025. **Photo by Ismael Beltran**

By Haylie Stum
Senior Sports Writer

Freshman forward Payton Annis remembers June 15, 2023 very clearly. It was right before she began her junior year of high school, when she received the text she had been waiting for her entire life.

Former North Texas women’s soccer

assistant coach Dylan Burnett sat on the other side of the conversation. He had just offered her a spot on the team for the 2025 season. Annis took a few hours to think about it with her family before committing to the team the same day.

North Texas was always Annis’ first choice. Baby pictures of Annis in Mean Green soccer shirts decorated her childhood home, and memories of

retrieving balls as the team’s ball girl are ones she holds closely.

The torch she held for the program did not just ignite on its own, however — it was passed down.

Annis’ mother, Caree Annis, formerly Caree Ridenour, played as a midfielder for the team from 2001 to 2004. She played a key role in leading the team to two Sun Belt Conference regular-season championships and its first NCAA appearance. She also earned a first-team all-conference nod in 2004.

“It was where she wanted to be,” Caree Annis said. “I didn’t have any problems with that because I knew the impact [head coach John Hedlund] made on my life and still does. Now, I get to watch it again with my daughter.”

Payton Annis made a name for herself in the first game of the 2025 season and her collegiate career on Aug. 14. Getting the start against Incarnate Word, she maximized her debut, scoring the team’s only goal in the 2-1 loss.

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Opinion

Letter from the Editor: The fruition of a lifelong love of storytelling

By Gianna Ortner-Findlay
Editor-in-Chief

Ever since I was a little girl, I have wanted to be a storyteller, surrounding myself with the written word in any way I could. At first, I wanted to be a fiction writer, creating worlds and characters that would come to life on the page, and providing young readers with the same sense of wonder I had experienced while reading.

Journalism caught my attention in high school in an introductory media class. I got a glimpse of what it would be like to tell people’s real stories. Eagle Nation Online’s advisor, Lisa Roskens, saw a fire for journalism ignite, informing me that I would be joining the paper as a full-time staff member, no ifs, ands or buts about it.

As I began my freshman year of college in the fall of 2022, I was determined to not stop writing. It was then that I discovered the *North Texas Daily* and its social media, where I subsequently found the date for its volunteer orientation.

I recall squeezing into Sycamore Hall’s room 203, where I sat on the floor. Then Editor-in-Chief Rhema Joy Bell explained what the *Daily* was and how volunteers were integral to the paper’s mission. I vowed on that humid August evening, sitting on the carpet with a notebook in my lap, that one day the woman standing up at the front of the room would be me.

Now, 10 semesters later, I have the honor and privilege to be the paper’s Editor-in-Chief. From volunteer to paid staff, each role I have held at the *Daily* has allowed for growth. I have watched the *Daily*’s highs and lows, learning



Editor-in-Chief Gianna Ortner-Findlay poses with a bookshelf inside of Sycamore Library on Aug. 23, 2025. **Photo by Ismael Beltran**

what does and does not work for the paper.

The work we do at the *Daily* does not happen in a vacuum, and the responsibility for ethical and empathetic journalism is an expectation that every staff member must — and does — uphold.

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North Texas Daily

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Faculty senate undergoes changes in order to comply with Senate Bill 37

FACULTY continued
from page 1

The law sparked university-wide contention at the beginning of June, when professors expressed concerns about self-censorship in anticipation of its passage. Faculty voiced unease about the bill disproportionately impacting majors in which the careers are not easily lucrative after graduation due to the comprehensive review required by the new law.

The University of Texas Board of Regents told its campus presidents on Aug. 21 to eliminate faculty senates rather than revise the bodies to adhere to new standards, according to the Texas Tribune.

The Board of Regents authorized UT presidents to replace faculty senates with new advisory faculty groups. During the UT Board of Regents meeting on Aug. 21, UT System Board Chairman Kevin Eltife said, before the vote, the board would consider how to proceed.

“We are going to take our time, we’re going to go slow, we’re going to figure out the best approach if we’re going to have these faculty senates on every campus or not,” Eltife said during the UT Board of Regents meeting. “Some may not have



The university Board of Regents voted to uphold its faculty senates on Aug. 14, 2025.

Photo by Ismael Beltran

them, we don’t know yet.”

Other Texas universities, like the University of Houston, Texas State University and Texas Tech University, voted to uphold their faculty senates and reform them for compliance.

Condrey said the general meetings will be broadcast live on the internet, with the

agendas publicly posted at least seven days in advance of the event. This change highlights new transparency rules outlined in the new law.

“The UNT System Board of Regents voted to amend the regents’ rule for faculty senates and has directed the faculty senates of each institution to adopt

all bylaws and statutes in accordance with SB37,” The University of North Texas System said in an email to the *Daily*. “This will not necessitate any formal break in the operations of the faculty senates.”

The university’s first scheduled faculty senate meeting will take place on Sept.

10 in the University Union room 332 at 2 p.m.

Editor’s note: *This article has been updated online to include information unknown at the time of publication and to correct Coby Condrey’s name.*

Denton weighs higher fees due to personnel costs

Diego Hernandez
Deputy News Editor

Denton residents could see higher costs for city services next year as officials propose a slate of fee increases tied in large part to rising personnel expenses.

The City Council reviewed the preliminary 2025-26 budget and fee schedule during its Aug. 19 meeting, with a discussion focused on fees and pay for police, firefighters and other staff.

“We wanted to provide a comprehensive view of the fees,” Cassey Ogden, deputy city manager and Texas Woman’s University alumna, said during the meeting. “However, we’re bringing them forward now. We have some updates just due to our costs.”

Ogden told the council that special event rates had been updated to reflect hourly increases for police officers and firefighters. The rates were organized into tiers, so event organizers who need more personnel or traffic control pay more in line with those impacts.

Kenneth Hedges, Denton fire chief and Texas A&M University alumnus, said billing for public safety staffing

at events will now reflect a more precise calculation of employee pay. He said the city is putting the bills on firmer footing so the invoice reflects the actual pay levels across ranks and steps.

Other updates also centered on personnel costs. Fees for emergency medical services are slated for their first update since 2015, a change that Hedges said is necessary.

“Our cost of acquiring the supplies, medication has increased since the last time we’ve changed the fee,” Hedges said during the meeting.

The fire department is also introducing a new “lift assist” fee, aimed at nursing and assisted living facilities that call crews to help residents who have fallen but are not injured. Hedges described it as a growing problem that pulls trucks and personnel out of service.

“Personnel [goes] out there, they lift the person back up, put them in their wheelchair, their bed, and that’s done, so that takes a unit out of service,” Hedges said during the meeting.

The fee, billed to the facility rather than the resident, is intended to recover costs and discourage unnecessary calls.

Fee adjustments also extend

to inspections. Fire prevention inspections will increase for repeated visits when violations are not corrected.

“The first inspection is just an annual compliance inspection that is free,” Hedges said during the meeting. “If a violation is found, the inspector notifies the owner and provides a piece of documentation of what needs to be corrected and gives them a date in which they must return. The reason why those fees are increasing is for the second time they have to come back out.”

The Denton Police Department’s basic peace officer course tuition is also proposed to rise, jumping from \$1,250 to \$2,300. Council members questioned whether the increase could discourage applicants at a time when the department is not fully staffed.

Jessica Robledo, Denton police chief and Angelo State University alumna, said the new rate would not put Denton out of line with other agencies.

“Where I come from in Central Texas, it’s actually \$3,000,” Robledo said during the meeting. “We’re still on the low end. And no, this is not affecting our agency’s joining our academy. This has nothing to do



Denton Fire Department fees are under review.

Photo by Caitlin Goodsell

with our internal candidates.”

Fee increases reached beyond public safety. Library fees for lost DVDs and CDs would rise, while recreation and aquatic center memberships would see increases ranging from a few dollars to \$25, depending on the pass type.

Pavilion, court and athletic facility rentals would also climb, though Ogden said these reflect the cost recovery model already adopted by the Council.

Also discussed was a new rate for utilities. A proposed rate was a three percent increase for both residential and commercial customers in the water fund, along with an 11 percent increase in wastewater rates.

The changes are needed

to cover higher operational costs and long-term system improvements. Additionally, the treated water rate that Denton charges to wholesale customers, such as neighboring cities, would increase from \$1.25 per 1,000 gallons to \$4.96.

“A substantial change, but this is really a result of our cost of service for serving that treated water to upper Trinity,” Ogden said during the meeting.

Stormwater fees are also slated to rise to adjust to the growing cost of drainage projects and maintenance across the city.

The council will take public comment at the Sept. 9 hearing before voting on the full budget and tax rate the following week.

Denton County Democratic Party holds largest annual LBJ-Obama Dinner to date

By Shehzil Imran
News Editor

The Denton County Democratic Party hosted its annual LBJ-Obama Dinner at the Lewisville Hilton Garden Inn on Aug. 23, featuring speeches from state representatives and local party members on mobilizing local efforts, as well as selling out of tickets for the first time since the event began in 2015.

The event had speeches from Texas State Rep. and Lt. Gov. candidate Vikki Goodwin and Texas State Rep. James Talarico, as well as virtual speeches from former U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke and U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro.

"[...] Democracy is not just an idea on paper," Denton County Democratic Party Chairwoman Delia Parker-Mims said in her welcoming speech. "It's something that we must fight to protect and pass on to the next generation. And tonight, we recommit ourselves to fight with you [...] We will organize, we will mobilize and we will not back down. [...]"

"Texas Democrats – One Team" was the dinner's central theme.

In his speech, Texas Democratic Party Chairman Kendall Scudder emphasized some of the shortcomings of the national Democratic Party, saying that change starts at a local level and Texas Democrats need to "do things differently" than they have in the past.

"This party can't win from ivory towers in Austin," Scudder said in his speech. "This party wins when we take our message to people, when we look them in the eye, when we shake their hands, we tell them what we stand for, when we ask them for their vote. [...] When we did things that way, we won elections."

Denton County Democratic Party



Texas Rep. James Talarico speaks during the LBJ Obama Dinner at the Hilton Garden Inn in Lewisville, Texas on Aug. 23, 2025. **Photo by Katie Brackens**

Executive Director Lesly Molina Poer stated that the attendance at the dinner was approximately 350 people.

"This was the first year we used all four sections of the ballroom," Poer said. "It's been wonderful to watch the dinner grow as we get to bring more speakers and folks with more notoriety to Denton County."

Democrat clubs from all over Denton County attended the LBJ-Obama dinner, including the Robson Ranch Democratic Club, the Carrollton Democrats and the Young Democrats of Denton County. Additionally, the UNT College Democrats, which had been on hiatus until last spring due to a lack of membership, had a table at the event.

"The Denton County Democratic Party was very fortunate enough to offer us a table so we could have young representation at

this year's gala, which is very important at all levels," Emeri Callaway, a UNT College Democrats member and political science major, said. "We are college students, yes, we're busy, but we also are really ready to take action and continue the movement of young college students in fighting for our rights and fighting for things we believe in."

The fundraiser celebrated and presented the Legacy Award to Marsha Keffer, a founder of the Denton County Democratic Party and a university alumna. According to one of Keffer's former mentees, Democrat Angela Brewer, Keffer taught others how to politically organize and run phone booths, recruit volunteers, delegate tasks and be a leader in the early days of the party.

"Marsha is a person who I call my godmother in democratic politics," Brewer

said in her speech before presenting Keffer the award. "Back in those days, when I was 20 years old, I didn't know my head from a hole in the ground... Marsha was able to bring me in and give me the skills and tools that I need [and] that I still use to this very day to organize in politics."

Multiple Texas House Democrats, such as Goodwin and Talarico, were in Chicago the previous week as part of a quorum break, in which they left Texas to talk to governors in other states and protest a bill that would redraw the state's congressional maps.

The redistricting map would allow Texas to add five Republican congressional seats.

"What we were trying to do is capture the nation's attention and focus them on this problem in Texas," Talarico said.

"After we broke quorum, Google searches for the word gerrymandering went through the roof [...] And now you've seen other states like California, New York and Illinois moving forward with their own retaliation to try to cancel out what's happening in Texas [...] None of that would have happened without our quorum break."

Goodwin and other House members returned to the Texas Capitol from a 15-day quorum break on Aug. 18, during which they were required to sign an agreement stating that, to leave the chamber, they would be released into the custody of a Department of Public Safety officer. This officer was to escort the member until Aug. 20, when the vote for the redistricting map would take place.

All representatives except Fort Worth Democrat Nicole Collier signed the agreement.

"You can imagine after two weeks of being away from home, most of us, all of us, had things that we had to do," Goodwin said in her speech. "So most of us signed just to get out of there, but Representative Nicole Collier, I have to hand it to her [...] what a brave woman."

With this year's dinner being the first time that the event was at full capacity, the Democratic Party said they plan to use the raised money to fund ongoing voter registration programs, voter conduct programs and social media campaigns for youth engagement.

"There are people across the state of Texas, without the help of the DNC and the national Democrats, who are getting the job done, and nowhere more so than in Denton County," O'Rourke said in his virtual speech. "Your county has shown more spirit, more fight, more tenacity, than almost any other part of the state [...] and that's what it's going to take."



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Artists Enclave holds 'Tierra Verde' Juried Exhibition to combine art with activism

By Sophia Carbajal

Senior Arts and Life Writer
UNT CoLab's Denton arts networking organization, Artists Enclave, hosted the "Tierra Verde" Juried Exhibition. These activism-oriented paintings explored the connection between art and its role in resistance and advocacy, on display at the UNT CoLab throughout August.

"Tierra Verde," translating to "green Earth" in English, was initially intended to focus on environmental issues. But as the exhibition gained entries, Artists Enclave Secretary and Denton resident Kelly Stribling Sutherland said the show changed to have a broader goal of fostering real-world conversations.

"It evolved into something new and different, and kind of edgy for us," Stribling Sutherland said. "But I think it's good, it speaks to the environment we live in today. We wanted to address something really current, which is why it spoke to so many people."

The exhibition features over 60 art pieces by Texas artists. The exhibition opened Aug. 1 and will continue through Aug. 29.

All participating artists were asked to show what they advocate for or express resistance to through their art. Artworks depicted a wide variety of subjects, ranging from portraits and photographs of protests to more abstract ideas, such as an artist's political alignment or religious beliefs.

More than 175 guests attended the exhibition's opening night reception on Aug. 1 at the UNT CoLab, where artists and art lovers discussed the show and enjoyed live music by Denton bluesgrass



An attendee looks at the Tierra Verde Art Gallery inside of the UNT CoLab on Aug 23, 2025. **Photo by Katie Brackens**

artist Rachel Yeatts. Additionally, the Tierra Verde winners were announced at the reception.

Denton mixed-media artist Jennifer Epperson was the exhibition's lone juror and selected five artists she thought best embodied the theme. University painting and drawing senior Aileen Khuu earned the juror's first-place award for her untitled oil painting.

Denton multidisciplinary artist Jose Angel Hernandez won second place, and Denton interior designer and Artists Enclave member at large Anadara Braun-Good was awarded third place.

Denton artist and Texas Woman's University master's student Lauren Doorish and Austin multimedia artist Genie Baranoff were awarded honorable mentions.

Khuu said her recent artistic goals have been to protest harmful conversations surrounding menstruation

while celebrating and encouraging healthy discussions about periods. Two of Khuu's oil paintings were exhibited, both depicting her experience of the menstrual cycle. Khuu said it is important to discuss period stigma because it causes problems like accessibility to period products and general healthcare.

"There are so many issues that people don't know about because we're made to feel like we have to hide talking about our periods," Khuu said. "Which is so crazy because periods are a completely natural bodily function and could be celebrated for the idea of womanhood and fertility."

Khuu also spoke about medical conditions like endometriosis at the exhibition "Artists Speak" on Aug. 2. At the "Speak", exhibiting artists shared the ideas behind their artwork and deepened conversations with other Artists Enclave members.

"Tierra Verde focused a lot on art

as a form of activism," Khuu said. "So my paintings worked really well with speaking on issues around period stigma and being really confrontational with those issues."

Susan Carol Davis, an Artists Enclave president and Denton resident, said the popularity and diversity of "Tierra Verde" prompted the organization to become more involved in political and social conversations. She said art is demonstrative of a person's beliefs and values, so Artists Enclave created a show to give artists space to advocate for something they care about.

Carol Davis described this shift as a step in a new direction.

"I think this show was speaking to the most present-day circumstances that we live in," Carol Davis said.

Artists Enclave is planning its next gallery show, entitled "Many Worlds, One Home," for spring 2026 to be focused similarly on societal issues.

Stribling Sutherland said shows like Tierra Verde mainly serve as ways for the community to have understanding conversations.

"Unlike a protest, a show is an art form. It's taken some time to create," Stribling Sutherland said. "It's kind of a permanent record about how you're feeling about something, and it's also up for a lot of interpretation from the viewer. So whatever you meant by your art is not necessarily how it speaks to a viewer, and that's part of the beauty of art."

Visitors may stop by the UNT CoLab at 207 N Elm St. to vote for the Tierra Verde People's Choice Award through Aug. 29. The winner will be announced Saturday, Aug. 30.

Things To Do:

The Denton Card Show

When: Saturday, Aug. 30, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Where: Texas Inn & Suites, 1500 Dallas Dr.
What: A variety of card collectors, all with different taste in hobbies can call the Denton Card Show home this weekend, from baseball to Pokémon and everything in between. They promise knowledgeable vendors and exciting finds. The event will also include an hourly giveaway.

North TX Overdose Awareness Day 2025

When: Sunday, Aug. 31, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Where: 903 North Elm St.
What: Free family event to unite and educate the community about substance use disorder and overdose prevention. Speakers, resource tables, memorial ceremony, food, music, and giveaways.

Monday Evening Yoga

When: Monday, Sept. 1, 7 - 8 p.m.
Where: Green Goddess Revival Cannabar and Lounge, 1807 N Elm St
What: Ease into your week with a relaxing, beginner-friendly yoga class led by Ash of Blissful Healing, created for all levels and bodies: This Monday at Green Goddess Revival Cannabar and Lounge.

Editor's note: The above events have been updated to correct date and times

Art, music and dance provide creative outlet for dozens in Flow Sessions: The Basslot, who celebrate one year anniversary.

Sophia Carbajal

Senior Arts and Life Writer

On the evening of Aug. 23, Flow Sessions: The Basslot took over The Bearded Monk, with bass from electronic music booming through the speakers, vibrating the air as performers danced, their shadows carving through the neon stage lights projected onto the walls.

The event, which lasted from 7 p.m. to 12 a.m. was comprised of two stages, nine DJs and an outdoor vendor market. The event was organized by the Denton Arts and Performance Collab and Sub Ninjas, a collective of local musicians.

Sub Ninjas founder Ricky Barnett, 36, said the goal of the event was to provide a judgment-free zone where people could express themselves in creative ways.

"It just gives a positive space for everybody to be in," Barnett said. "In today's world, I feel like these spaces are incredibly important."

Barnett picked each DJ that performed throughout the night, which included Lushreds, Beelzebarber, Mr. Kittens, Onio, Ricky B, Stationz, Wild Wata, Yeah Def and Zilent. The event is partially named for Barnett's love of bass music, a type of electronic dance music, and his ties to flow –

a performative art reminiscent of festival events like Burning Man – where dancers spin, twirl or juggle props.

Performers used props such as staffs, bowling pins, hula hoops, fans, levitation wands and items called poi, which have weights attached to the ends of strings. Although flow performers typically spin props lit on fire, almost all props used at the event were equipped with bright neon LEDs that glowed in the dark.

One of these performers, who prefers to be identified by her stage name, Ali Oop, is the founder of DAPC and an avid lover of the flow community. Ali Oop created DAPC in 2021 to help artists like her find opportunities.

"The reason I started DAPC was because it was really hard to find a consistent event that would heavily promote and be at places that had heavy foot traffic," Ali Oop said. "So I was like, 'Well, I'll just do it myself,' because that's the kind of person I am."

Ali Oop picked each of the vendors for the outdoor market, including the art and craft vendors Moonlight Creations and Neon Crystals, as well as the cannabis manufacturer Leaf Healz, who parked their Cannabus – a mobile cannabis shop – behind their table where they sold clothing.

Throughout the night, Ali Oop went back and forth between spinning her rainbow staff and attending to her booth, where she sold items from her shop, Happy Handcrafts by Ali. Ali Oop creates all kinds of handmade jewelry, placing colorful insects and flowers she collects between resin casts.

Ali Oop said Flow Sessions: The Basslot gave her a chance to make connections and be creative.

"I think it's really fun to share something new with people," Ali Oop said. "The same way I like to share my art, I like to share my flow art too."

The first DJ of the night, musician Gary Barnhart, known as DJ Beelzebarber, began his performance at 8 p.m. with a remix of the song "Hello" (2010) by Martin Solveig and Dragonette. Barnhart is also the owner of Barnhart's Barbershop located on the Denton Square.

Barnhart said he wants to be as active as he can in the Denton community by contributing to the local music scene, which he has been a part of for over 15 years.

"I like to really be involved in lots of local things and promote local things," Barnhart said. "I've always loved dancing and dance music in



Denton Arts & Performance Collab founder Ali Oop partakes in the Flow Sessions: The Basslot at The Bearded Monk on Aug. 23, 2025. **Photo by Ismael Beltran**

Denton. I think it has ebbs and flows, ups and downs, but I like to try to keep it alive."

Barnhart said events like Flow Sessions: The Basslot serve as a therapeutic way for people to enjoy themselves.

"There's a lot of really cool stuff happening here that people want to go to," Barnhart said. "People very obviously want to dance with the state of things in general. It's a really nice release to have a moment where we can move our bodies and feel positivity around us."

Flow Sessions: The Basslot marked one year since Barnett started organizing Flow Session events and said he plans to keep the bass music scene alive by providing opportunities for musicians to play and for the community to enjoy.

"We aim to provide a positive space for everyone, it doesn't matter who you are or what you're like, we just want to be able to give somebody an outlet through music," Barnett said.

KAYTRANADA surprises fans, refreshing take on genre in newest release ‘AIN’T NO DAMN WAY!’

Matthew Winter

Arts and Life/ The Dose Editor

For every single one of Haitian-born Canadian Producer KAYTRANADA’s studio albums, he has consistently delivered a new, refreshing take on the electronic genre. From more rhythmic dance albums, like his 2016 debut “99.9%,” to “Timeless” (2024), which featured more pronounced R&B and hip-hop influences.

The only consistent throughline in the artist’s discography is that the projects have been Grammy-nominated or Grammy award-winning.

KAYTRANADA continued in his success with “AIN’T NO DAMN WAY!” Released on Aug. 15, the album has garnered critical acclaim for its return to the artist’s original sound. This fourth studio album features 35 minutes of hypnotic house music with minimal lyrics, harkening back to his dance roots.

The consistency of its mid-length runtime

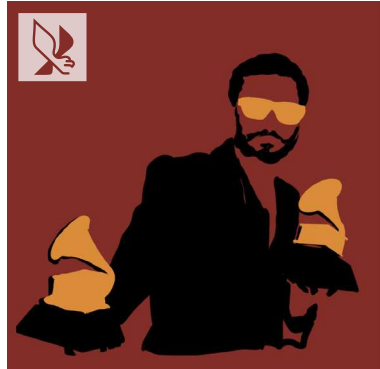


Illustration by
Victoria Maldonado

is nothing to dismiss, as every track brings something new while maintaining a stellar quality. Every one of these self-produced beats is lush with unique, captivating sounds.

The album cover was created by fellow Canadian artist Vincent Tsang, who features the artist’s signature curvy, abstract style and two-tone colors. The dark terracotta background, juxtaposed with the motif of a winking figure, is inviting and playful.

Opening the album with the jumpy “SPACE INVADER,” extraterrestrial synths are placed over a 4/4 time signature. Generally, 4/4 is the standard signature used for house music, so this choice immediately signals the album’s return to the roots present in KAYTRANADA’s early albums.

Next, “CHAMPIONSHIP” is a sub-two-minute track that features a rolling drum pattern and gorgeous chimes intercut with live-mixing-esque stutters that prove KAYTRANADA is in his most comfortable and well-versed pocket. The song reinforces that he is one of the greats of modern electronic music.

“HOME” is the crunchiest of the entire tracklist. Lush wide synths complement the fantastic drums by Alex Sowinski, another Canadian artist and the drummer for the award-winning fusion band BADBADNOTGOOD. His drumming talent takes the track just one step further, making it truly great.

The exciting “TARGET JOINT” is a song born for celebration, from the glittery string synths to the funky bassline that leaves an irresistible need to get up and dance. The album also returns to more live-mixing-esque moments, which are few and far between for the album. When KAYTRANADA leaves the

beat of the song lingering in the imagination, it creates an insanely addictive feeling.

After a fast-paced three-track run, the next two songs slow down the adrenaline-fuelled runtime with a couple of the longest tracks. “THINGS” features a siren-like sample, mystical blips and a breathy synth that mixes alongside house chords and a sample from revolutionary Nigerian Afro-boogie artist Steve Monite. The slower pace makes the payoff more epic.

“backstABS” is regrettably the worst track on the album. For such a stellar album, with back-to-back shining examples of what a perfectly curated rhythm should sound like, a song that is still phenomenal but lacks the magic that the others possess stands out like a sore thumb. The bassline is the star of the show in this track, but it sounds similar to the rest of the album in that it feels immensely repetitive. For this to be the only track that feels “repetative” on a dance album is incredible.

Energy immediately picks back up with the following song, “GOOD LUCK.” With the return of crunchy basslines and introspectively sounding bright synths, the drums, however, are the standout. Jazz drummer Karriem Riggins— who has worked with artists such as legendary producer J Dilla — is featured on the track.

Complimented by gorgeous strings and sampled brass horns, “SHINE YOUR LIGHT FOR WE” is a standout for its soul samples and jazzy guitars. Every time sampled artist Barry White’s soulful vocals return to one of the only tracks with a consistent chorus, it is a treat. Each concurrent chorus builds upon the song with more layers until they blend perfectly.

Similar sounding to music by Grammy-award winning and prolific French dance producers, Justice, with whom KAYTRANADA is currently on tour, “GOODBYE BITCH!” sounds directly produced by the duo. Its car-alarm-sounding sample and harsh bass synth rip through the track’s clicky synth, leaving the brain overwhelmed with funky sound.

The best track on the album, “DON’T WORRY BABE / I GOT U BABE,” is the closest the album gets to his classic house start. The tremolo vocals that surround the entire track constantly repeat, slowly building up alongside the wide synth until the wall of noise finally gathers enough energy and pays off with a goosebump-inducing nostalgic synth solo that sounds sampled from a Roland SH-1000, a synth machine KAYTRANADA would have grown up with. It is played off with a repeating 4/4 bar that is angelic with its head-spinning rotary effect.

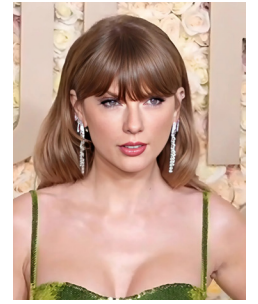
Following perfectly, “BLAX” is another standout, as it is the most danceable song, continuing the repeating 4/4 bar philosophy of the previous track. This song pulls the same trick, slowly layering hypnotic loops until it carries the album over the finish line with “DO IT (AGAIN)”. The last track is the only featured song on the entire project, featuring the legendary Atlanta-born ‘90s girl group TLC, which seemingly inspired much of the classic dance sampling he uses today.

“AIN’T NO DAMN WAY!” one-ups KAYTRANADA’s previous work with his stellar production, showing that with time, he has aged into one of the generation’s best electronic producers.

Matthew’s rating: 5/5

Icon of the Week:

Taylor Swift



Credit: iHeartRadio CA

The Daily’s icon of the week is the prolific American singer-songwriter Taylor Swift. Swift, amid a plethora of recent achievements, announced her engagement to American football tight end and New Heights podcast co-host Travis Kelce on Instagram on Aug. 26.

Kelce, who has been dating the star since late 2023, proposed to the musician with a ring worth over half a million dollars. The wedding date is not set yet, and it is unclear how long the celebrities will stay “Timeless” (2023).

Swift, during her multi-decade spanning musical career, has won over 700 awards and been nominated over 1600 times.

A year and a half after Swift’s last album, the double feature “The Tortured Poets Department” (2024), Swift announced her 12th studio album on Aug. 13, entitled “The Life of a Showgirl,” which is set to be released on Oct. 3, 2025.

‘Weapons’ exceeds expectations, unsettles with new breed of horror

Victoria Maldonado & Alejandra Osegueda

Illustrations Editor/Opinion Editor

“Weapons” rolled its way into theaters Aug. 9 toward the end of a long summer of anticipated blockbuster releases. However, the sleeper hit distinguished itself in theaters from its counterparts as a new breed of horror that blends childhood innocence and supernatural terror.

The flick was directed by Zach Cregger, known for his debut film, another unusual yet standout horror movie, “Barbarian” (2022).

Cregger based “Weapons” on the central themes of loss and grief. While not an immediately obvious grounding theme in the film’s thrill of gore and supernatural mystery, the heartache of loss builds as the story switches narratives from character to character in a chapter sequence.

The narrative chapters begin with the first character perspective of third-grade teacher Justine Gandy (Julia Garner), as she arrives at her classroom to find all but one of her students missing.

The town of Maybrook, where the story takes place, is then sent spiraling into chaos after the 17 third-graders who vanished are discovered to have willfully fled their homes at exactly 2:17 a.m. The children ran out of their houses sporting the spirited, unsettling arms-apart pose that the “Weapons” marketing team had in their trailers and movie posters.

Only one student, Alex Lilly, played by Cary Christopher, was suspiciously left behind in the event of his class’s disappearance. Lilly also actively avoids Gandy’s questions when she embarks on her investigation of what happened to her class.

A teacher burdened with both the mystery of her

missing students and the judgment of her community, Gandy is fragile yet resilient. Garner balances that tension beautifully, portraying her as someone quietly desperate for answers while being crushed by the public eye. Her performance grounds the supernatural elements in lived-in humanity, making her one of the film’s strongest presences.

The movie’s narrative chapters also follow Josh Brolin as Archer Graff, a devastated father whose son was in Gandy’s class and ends up joining up with the teacher to find out where the students have gone.

As a grieving father, Brolin brings raw conviction and intensity to the role. His determination to uncover what happened to his child lends the film much of its urgency, and his interactions with Gandy form the most compelling onscreen dynamic.

The vulnerability Brolin injects into Graff prevents the character from ever feeling one-dimensional, marking him as one of the film’s most memorable pieces.

The narrative switches get shorter and build more anticipation as they dive into the supporting characters’ stories of Benedict Wong as Principal Marcus Miller and Amy Madigan as Gladys, the only student who was left behind’s strange aunt.

Wong’s character operates in a quieter but equally vital register as the principal of a middle school in chaos. Serving as a figure of both authority and suspicion, Miller embodies the town’s growing mistrust.

Wong excels at playing understated menace while keeping Miller ambiguous — viewers are never entirely sure whether he is complicit or merely desperate. This uncertainty contributes significantly to the tension of the second act, particularly as the narrative draws closer to identifying who and what is responsible for the class’s disappearance.

The film’s eerie play on innocence is provided by Christopher’s performance of Lilly. As the only child who does not disappear, Lilly becomes a vessel of both hope and unease as he leads the audience into answers with his character.

Christopher’s subdued performance allows the character’s silence to speak volumes, making his eventual defiance against the force behind his classmates’ disappearance one of the film’s most affecting moments.

Other players round out the mystery, including Alden Ehrenreich’s Paul Morgan who carries the guilt of a man trapped between professional duty and personal loyalty. While Austin Abrams as James adds a portrait of youthful despair, embodying how trauma festers in those who are overlooked.

Madigan as Gladys commands the third act. What

begins as an innocent, maternal presence dissolves into something grotesque.

Weapons opened to solid success, pulling in more than \$43 million domestically in its opening weekend. While not on the same level as blockbuster superhero films, this performance is impressive for a mid-budget horror movie, already placing it among the year’s more memorable genre entries.

Weapons is not only a horror story about a loss, but also a coming-of-age tale about bravery, loyalty and what it means to face the unknown together. With authentic performances, disturbing visuals, and an ending that lingers, it is a film that stays with the audience long after they leave the theater.

Victoria and Alejandra’s rating: 4-5/5

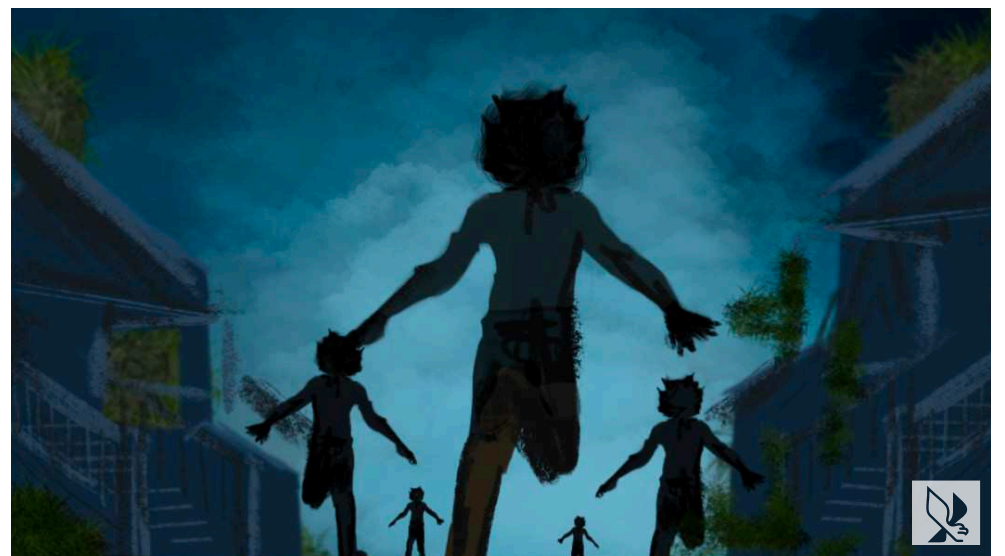


Illustration by Victoria Maldonado

Freshman forward Payton Annis aims to take her own legacy further

LEGACY continued from page 1

She used her left foot to lace one of North Texas' 38 shots past the goalkeeper just outside of the arc, beating a Cardinal defender.

"I remember getting the ball on the outside a few times, and I would drive in or go down the line and cross it in," Payton Annis said. "That time, I [realized] I only had one player to beat and there's the goal. I just took it and shot it."

The Wiley, Texas native became the first North Texas legacy player ever to score a goal because of her efforts against the University of the Incarnate Word. She saw many Mean Green goals scored in her time growing up as a fan, but kicking the ball in herself was a full-circle moment.

"I remember sprinting to Ava Haley and her spinning me around with one arm," Payton Annis said. "It was so cool, and I could hear my parents screaming from the stands."

The only smile bigger than the freshman's when the ball hit the net was her mother's.

"Even now I'm getting goosebumps," Caree Annis said. "That very first game, she was listed as a starter. I don't know if you can explain the emotions [...]. When she scored that goal, it was probably one of the most amazing feelings I've ever had in my entire life."

Payton Annis thrives offensively, using her speed and agility to beat opponents to the goal. Her mother,



Annis is the daughter of former Mean Green player Caree Annis who played from 2001-04. Credit: **Payton Annis**

on the other hand, played with a defensive mindset, commanding the backline and standing firm against opposing offenses. Hedlund said they mirror each other in terms of fierceness, but they remain separate in his eyes.

"When they are both in my office, I see the mother-daughter relationship and two [people] I have coached," Hedlund said. "But on the field, I just see a very talented kid that is highly competitive and wants to win. Caree was the same way back in the day."

Payton Annis always wanted to follow in her mother's footsteps but is pushing to take it one step further.

"I want to be better than she was," Payton Annis said. "Obviously, we're different players. She didn't score a lot, but she wants me to do better than she did, too. That's a big goal for me."

Hedlund has known Payton Annis her entire life, as she grew up around the coaching staff. He thinks there is no ceiling to what she can achieve with the team.

"Payton can go as far as she wants to, she's that talented," Hedlund said. "I really don't see her as a freshman. I will lean on her to bring her A-game each game like I do with my veterans, and I know she will be a major factor in our offense throughout the year."

For the Annis family, North Texas women's soccer is worth investing in. The family said the culmination of 16 conference titles and a well-crafted culture by Hedlund makes for a program that is easy to get behind.

Payton Annis, the second legacy player to go through the Mean Green, already immortalized her name for North Texas with the goal against the Cardinals. It is through her grit and relentlessness that Caree Annis believes her daughter's impact on the program will extend far beyond her familial ties.

"She's always been the smallest," Caree Annis said. "She's always been kind of a step behind, but that never stopped her. She pushed and pushed, and she's peeking at the right moment. That's been really cool to watch. We know this is just the beginning for her, and [we're] really looking forward to what the next four years and hopefully beyond that is next for her."

Athlete of the Week:

Rachel Roebuck



Credit: **Mean Green Sports**

In a 2-1 Aug. 23 win against Prairie View A&M, North Texas soccer's graduate student defender Rachel Roebuck scored one of the team's two goals and her first of the season on a penalty kick. Her score was the game-winning goal after the two teams were tied 1-1 at the 51st minute with no further goals after hers. Four games into the team's season, Roebuck has continued to be relied upon playing a team-leading 360 minutes, following last season where she played 1,519. While her goal came against the Panthers, she recorded her fourth assist of the year in the same game. Her assist came in the 28th minute with a pass to junior forward Summer Brown. For her performance, Roebuck also earned the American Conference's Player of the Week Honorable Mention.

At a Glance:

Mean Green Football

The first kickoff of the Mean Green football team's season will be at 7 p.m. against Lamar University at DATCU Stadium with plenty of unknown attached to its team. In the contest, North Texas will unveil its newly constructed defense featuring five starters that each transferred from Sam Houston, alongside the former Bearkats defensive coordinator Skyler Cassity.

North Texas Volleyball

North Texas volleyball will begin its first season under head coach Dan Fleming who just spent 20 years at DII Colorado Mesa. The program's first test under Fleming will be three away games at the Lion Invitational all in Commerce, Texas. The Mean Green will face off against Little Rock, Providence and East Texas A&M from Aug. 29-30. Each game will be streamable on the East Texas A&M Live Stream.

North Texas Soccer

After securing a 2-1 Aug. 23 win at Prairie View A&M University (0-2), North Texas soccer (2-2) returns for an Aug. 28 home match against McNeese State University (1-2-1) who recently lost 0-3 to the University of Louisiana-Lafayette (2-1). After McNeese State, the Mean Green will also have to face Oklahoma (4-0) on Aug. 31. The Sooners so far in their season have already beaten a ranked No. 22 Oklahoma State 4-1 on Aug. 17.

North Texas football will face first test in Lamar on Aug. 30 after reloading roster

Ian Pfaffenberger
Staff Writer

North Texas football aims to show off its new-look roster against Lamar University in its Aug. 30 season opener after a losing 2024 season and 30-28 bowl game loss.

The Mean Green have retooled their roster over the offseason with 68 new players, tied for second most in the Football Championship Subdivision, and hired a new defensive coordinator, Skyler Cassity.

The team's first test will come on Saturday against Lamar, which has had a string of recent successes in the FCS.

The Cardinals, led by third-year head coach Pete Rossomando, jumped to 24th in the national FCS rankings last year. They are also no strangers to taking on bigger programs, as three nationally ranked FCS opponents loom in their schedule.

"I think [Lamar] is a super quality ball club," head coach Eric Morris said. "I think they built it the right way. I think they have older players that have been in the system that understand what they're trying to accomplish."

North Texas's lineup is stacked with veteran experience, including 41 new transfers, the second most in the Football Bowl Subdivision.

Cassity brought over seven Sam Houston transfers, five of whom will start for the Mean Green on defense.

"That was huge for us in the offseason and recruiting them, and I think it's paid off for us," Morris said. "You can see those guys, I think they're ready to go a little bit faster once they get here."

The newly constructed defense comes after deficiencies last year, when the team ranked 130th in total defense, 118th in points allowed per game and 127th in yards allowed per game.

Senior linebacker Trey Fields said the

unit overcame an initial gelling process with all the new pieces and has improved throughout the offseason.

"We came a long way from coming in the spring," Fields said. "It was rocky for a minute, but we just kept on working, kept on having meetings, and then we're just sharpening things up."

Redshirt-freshman Drew Mestemaker, earning the team's starting quarterback job, was one of the most notable offseason stories. Mestemaker edged out senior Miami transfer and fifth-year QB Reese Poffenbarger.

He put on a show last season in the SERVPRO First Responder Bowl, recording 393 passing yards with three total touchdowns, including a 70-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter.

While Poffenbarger has more years under his belt, it was Mestemaker's experience in North Texas's offensive system that set him apart in camp.

"Being in the offense, I felt like it kind of clicked to me pretty quick," Mestemaker said. "All last season plus the bowl game helped me become more and more confident in it and comfortable in it."

Mestemaker had not started a game since the ninth grade before the bowl game. He walked into the North Texas program and earned the backup spot last season behind now-Virginia senior quarterback Chandler Morris.

This season, he has the opportunity to lead the Mean Green from the get-go.

"It's awesome," Mestemaker said. "Obviously, it's been not a very common thing in my football career [to start], and to finally have this moment and be the guy and have the team rally around me, it's really special."

Mestemaker will take charge of an offense that features new and home-grown talent, including an experienced offensive



The Mean Green football team will kickoff their season against the Lamar University Cardinals on Aug. 30 at DATCU Stadium.

Photo by Aiden Gonzalez

line and a plethora of wide receivers.

"I think we got a really special offensive group," Mestemaker said. "I think this offensive skill position group is elite, and I'm excited to see what we can do this season."

Numerous offensive players earned Preseason All-American Conference honors from at least one publication, including two pass catchers, three offensive linemen and sophomore running back Makenzie McGill II.

McGill is fresh off a breakout redshirt freshman season, where he logged 10 touchdowns and 6 yards per carry, solidifying his place as the lead running back to start the season.

He was recently named on the Preseason Doak Walker Award Watch List, an award given to the nation's top running backs.

"Makenzie McGill is an explosive back," Fields said. "More downhill, you will lose him in the backfield for sure. He's

an explosive kid."

While spirits are high to kick off the new season, junior wide receiver Landon Sides, who was set to be one of the team's starting pass catchers, will potentially miss the game due to injury.

If so, North Texas will roll out redshirt-freshman Baron Tipton in Sides' stead. The Coppel, Texas native received praise from Morris for his offseason growth.

"We're confident in what Baron Tipton gives us right there," Morris said. "Big target, six-foot-five, 210 pounds, has made some great catches down the field."

After an offseason of change and positional uncertainty, Mean Green fans will finally be able to see a refreshed roster back in action, one that is said to be hungry to prove itself.

"These kids are ready to go out and show this university and this city what they've been working towards," Morris said. "I'm just ready to get that first kickoff on the way, and let's play some ball."

Letter from the Editor: Continuing the *Daily's* legacy of telling the stories that matter to Denton

LETTER continues
from page 1

Hannah Everett, who has previously held the position of News Editor at the publication, is transitioning smoothly into her new role as Managing Editor. She can navigate breaking news in a way paralleled by none, with a passion

for writing that I have seen flourish during her time at the *Daily*. Everett's work ethic continues to amaze me, and I am excited to see her leadership grow further in this role as my second-in-command.

Digital Editor Aiden Gonzalez has been a staple of the *Daily*, with an eye and passion for photography

that comes from years of loving the camera. Gonzalez is stepping back into the Digital Editor position after spending the summer as Photo Editor, and his innovative digital eye will take our online presence yet another step in the right direction.

Although Mekielle Vaughn will be stepping into his second semester on the editorial board at the *Daily*, his ability to absorb new knowledge and visual aptitude are skills I expect to see flourish in his role as Design Editor.

Page Designer Janese Mashell is welcomed back to the *Daily's* editorial board after a few semesters away, and with the same aptitude for learning as Vaughn, I know that each page designed by Mashell will be done with care.

Matthew Winter, in his second semester as the Arts & Life/The Dose editor, has always had a passion for the arts and culture scene here in Denton. In the four semesters he has been a part of the *Daily*, he has consistently demonstrated his commitment and love for the community, including the creation of his recurring series, Denton In-Depth.

While new to the team and the university, News Editor Shehzil Imran brings with her a strong background in news and culture writing that will help her serve the people of Denton well.

Former Arts & Life/The Dose Editor and the section's former senior writer,

Diego Hernandez, is approaching his new role as Deputy News Editor with grace. Hernandez has consistently been able to identify the stories that matter to Dentonites, and his talent continues to grow with each passing semester.

Sports Editor Justin Na is a powerhouse in his craft, with his passion for feature writing and sports journalism evident in every story he writes. His ability to teach others is a gift that I am happy he will get to share with the staff in his third semester as the section's editor.

Alejandra Osegueda, in her sixth semester at the *Daily*, is a constant learner, utilizing her research skills to better the section one piece at a time. Osegueda is a teacher at heart, and I have no doubt her second semester as Opinion Editor will allow her to grow the section even further.

This is Photo Editor Ismael Beltran's first semester on the editorial board, but his passion and drive for photography are evident in every aspect of his work. I know that the photography section will be in good hands this fall.

Video Editor Cooper Collins will be joining the *Daily's* editorial board for his fourth semester. His plans for the section will see it flourish, helping the *Daily* reach its vision of producing compelling multimedia journalism.

Illustrations Editor Victoria Maldonado is new to the *Daily*, but

her illustrative talent and potential are sewn throughout each piece she creates. I look forward to seeing her creative mind at work this semester.

Fourth-semester returning copyeditor Samantha Heath and first-semester copyeditor Baylee Cantrell each have a keen eye and invaluable skill for AP Style – each an integral member of our workflow and our editorial board.

Lastly, I would like to thank former Editors-in-Chief Chris Moss, Ismael Belkoura, Ayden Runnels, Rhema Joy Bell, former Arts & Life/The Dose Editor Samantha Thornfelt and former Design Editor MaKenzie Givan. Their constant encouragement and examples of leadership left a lasting impression, and I hope to make them proud with every decision I make as EIC.

I would also like to thank my mother, Shannon Payne, who never once told me I could not do what I loved or that any dream was too far for me to achieve.

In my last semester at the university, it is an immense honor to be able to give back to the paper and community I have served for three and a half years. I would not be the person I am today without the *Daily*, and I hope that my leadership – as the woman now at the front of the room – can instill in another person a lifetime love of storytelling.



Editor-in-Chief Gianna Ortnier-Findlay has been involved with the *North Texas Daily* for 10 semesters.

Photo by Ismael Beltran

Fort Worth ISD needs reevaluation as academic decline underserves students, risks state intervention

By **Alejandra Osegueda**
Opinion Editor

Fort Worth Independent School District, one of the largest and most prominent K-12 public school systems in Texas, is currently at risk of state intervention after it was revealed that there has been a pattern of failing academic reports for five consecutive years.

The lack of education that students in the state are receiving and the extent to which their districts are underserving them needs to be reevaluated, as years of low campus ratings have been allowed to pass with serious improvement only showing at the threat of state intervention.

State intervention would be the most immediate solution for a district that has consistently had failing Texas Education Agency ratings. However, FWISD and the state should collaborate toward a solution to improve ratings,

as state takeovers, such as the one at Houston ISD, have had controversial results.

The TEA released its 2025 A-F Accountability Ratings for schools on Aug. 15, alongside their delayed 2024 ratings. According to the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, this year's ratings brought good news for the central Fort Worth district, as there were only one-third as many F-rated schools as there were in previous years.

The rating is a holistic evaluation of standardized test scores, graduation rates and career readiness. The A-F TEA rating enables parents and taxpayers to access information on individual schools and the overall district performance, as per the TEA website.

However, the improved ratings may not be enough to prevent the district from being taken over by the state, given its past failing rating for the FWISD's middle school, which have maintained low test scores for five years. The

campus' low ratings were only recently made public during the 2023-2024 TEA rating period, following a two-year legal battle over changes the TEA made to its rating system. According to the Fort Worth Report, the campus has since been closed and merged with another middle school, the Leadership Academy of Forest Oak Middle School, within the district.

The closure of the campus, formerly known as the Leadership Academy of Forest Oak Sixth Grade, was a preemptive measure by the district to avoid state intervention. Concerns remain for the district as reports of low standardized testing scores have come to light.

"Well, they still are, as I understand it, the lowest performing large school district in the state," said Republican State Sen. Phil King during a Texas Senate Education Committee meeting when discussing whether state intervention is a necessary action for FWISD. "I've got more Fort Worth ISD than any senator. And, I just don't know what the right decision is, but if I had to bet today, it's replacing the board, so...."

As a district, FWISD holds an overall rating of C from the TEA for this year. As one of Texas' largest school districts, with the responsibility of providing nearly 75,000 students with a proper education, FWISD should not barely escape a state takeover with C ratings.

At the time of writing, the decision regarding a state takeover for FWISD is still pending and will be determined later in the fall, allowing the district to implement improvements to enhance its rating in the meantime.

The five years of unacceptable TEA ratings are not just statistics, but entire classrooms of students who are not receiving an adequate education and will have to carry those setbacks throughout their lives.

According to the Texas Tribune, these staggeringly low TEA scores are, unfortunately, not unique to FWISD, as it is only one of a record-breaking five Texas school districts facing a state takeover this year following the release of the

ratings.

The other districts that are facing state intervention include, Connally, Lake Worth, Beaumont and Wichita Falls, according to the Texas Tribune.

This pattern of school districts receiving poor evaluations due to an inability to provide students with a basic education, which often leads to state intervention, should be viewed as a warning sign of a failing state of education in Texas.

There is the weighing factor of the pandemic to consider. The pandemic has presented significant challenges to students, educators and educational systems alike, impacting the K-12 system in ways that are still being discovered. Literacy and math skills among students are worse now than they were before, according to The Annie E. Casey Foundation, making teaching an even more challenging feat now than it has ever been.

Despite the pandemic's impact on K-12 education, other school districts of similar size to FWISD are still managing to not only stay afloat but also academically thrive. According to WFAA, Dallas ISD hosts over half of North Texas' top-rated TEA schools across the metroplex, achieving TEA scores of 99 and above, which would qualify as an A rating.

Moving forward, school districts, educational systems and the state government all need to invest more heavily in the state of education to alleviate the systemic failures of these districts that have left students lacking an education.

This investment should begin by properly funding Texas schools, providing them with better resources and an adequate number of teachers per student. The majority of underfunded districts in Texas are also associated with lower TEA rankings.

Education in Texas needs to be focused on for change to occur, providing all students with a quality education and establishing better outcomes, rather than relying on barely avoiding state intervention.

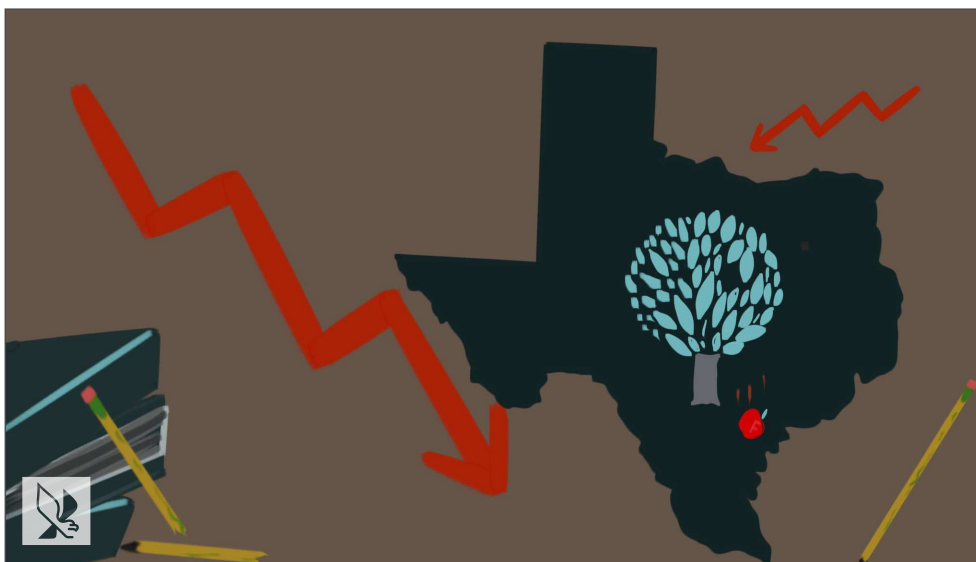


Illustration by Victoria Maldonado

North Texas Daily's Fall 2025 Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief

Gianna Ortner-Findlay

Hey y'all! I'm a senior majoring in digital and print journalism with a minor in creative writing. This is my tenth semester at the *Daily*, where I've served as Managing Editor and Arts & Life/The Dose Editor. I'm honored to be Editor-in-Chief, serving Denton with well-reported, ethical journalism in my final undergraduate semester.



Managing Editor

Hannah Everett

Hello everyone! I am a senior digital and print journalism major with a minor in sociology. I have been a part of the *North Texas Daily* for four semesters, with my previous two semesters as news editor. Along with the *Daily*, I am the president of the university chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. I am committed to helping the wonderful people in each section produce their best work!



Design Editor

Mekielle Vaughn

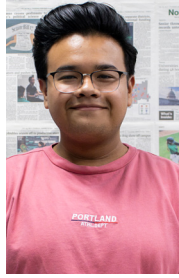
Hi guys! My name is Mekielle, and I'm the design editor for the semester. I'm a senior, majoring in communication design within the graphic design track, and this is my second semester with the *Daily*! Very glad to be back and to work on the layout this semester.



Digital Editor

Aiden Gonzalez

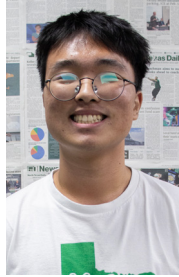
What's shakin' bacon! I'm a senior studying photojournalism with a photography minor. I've spent seven semesters with the *Daily's* photo department and serve as managing editor for Hatch Visuals, a student-led photo agency. I love storytelling through photographs, and blending creativity with leadership in visual journalism.



Sports Editor

Justin Na

Hello! I'm Justin Na, and I'm a junior majoring in digital and print journalism. This is my fifth semester as a part of the *Daily*, and I've thoroughly enjoyed every moment of it. I'm excited to keep improving the content the section creates every week and know we're bound to accomplish some great stuff this semester!



News Editor

Shehzil Imran

Hi! My name is Shehzil Imran, and I'm the news editor this semester. This is my first semester with the *Daily* and at UNT, and I'm majoring in digital and print journalism. I'm excited for what this semester holds, and I cannot wait to see all the work that the *Daily* will do.



Opinion Editor

Alejandra Osegueda

Hey! I'm Alejandra Osegueda, excited to return to the opinion desk this fall. I'm a junior double-majoring in digital and print journalism and anthropology. This is my sixth semester at the *Daily*, previously serving as opinion editor and columnist. I'm ready for sharp, well-informed opinions.



Arts & Life/ The Dose Editor

Matthew Winter

Hi all. I'm a junior, and half of my time spent at UNT has been a part of this newspaper. I really enjoy telling people's stories and believe Denton is a town chock-full of interesting stories to tell. With my senior writer, Sophia Carbajal, I hope we can cover all of it this fall!



Photo Editor

Ismael Beltran

¡Hola y'all! I'm majoring in sports journalism with a minor in management. I am stoked to be the photo editor for this semester. Building on what I've learned over the past four semesters at the *Daily*, I will strive to continue our stunning photos for our publication. I hope y'all tune in for this journey! ¡Vamos!



Video Editor

Cooper Collins

Howdy! My name is Cooper Collins. My major is converged broadcast media with two minors in Journalism and urban planning. This is my fourth semester at the *NT Daily*. I am excited to work with my videographers to make the video section the best it can be this semester!



Illustrations Editor

Victoria Maldonado

Hey y'all! My name is Victoria, and I'm the illustration editor for the semester. I'm a senior, majoring in studio art and concentrating in painting and drawing. This is my first semester with the *Daily*. Excited to illustrate and help!



Page Designer

Janese Mashell

Hi everyone! My name is Janese Mashell, and I'm the page designer for the semester. I'm a senior, majoring in digital and print journalism with a minor in English. It is my fifth semester with the *Daily*. I've written for the Dose and illustrated, and last year worked as a copy editor and page designer.



Copyeditor

Baylee Cantrell

Hi! My name is Baylee Cantrell, and this is my first semester with the *Daily* as one of our copyeditors. I am a junior digital and print journalism major minoring in marketing, and I am excited to read and review every story before publication. I look forward to the *Daily* doing great things this fall!



Copyeditor

Samantha Heath

Ayo, everyone, what's up? It's your GOAT, Samantha Heath, and I am excited to run it back as the copyeditor for the fourth semester at the *Daily*. I am a senior studying print and digital journalism with a minor in LGBTQ+ studies, and I am thrilled to see how the *Daily* grows and evolves during this fall semester!



Deputy News Editor

Diego Hernandez

Howdy doody, my name is Diego! This will be my fifth semester at the *Daily*, and this semester I have the pleasure of being the Deputy News Editor. I hope to provide great coverage this semester with our team.

